

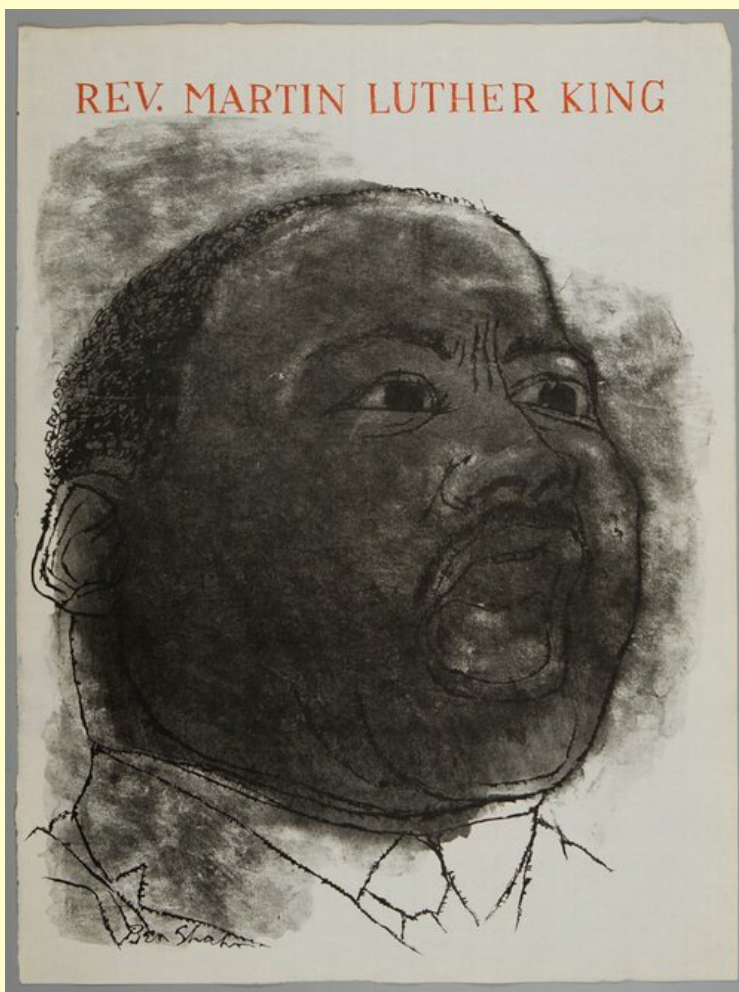


The Congregation Mishkan Israel

More than a place, We're a community

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2022

Series 106 Number 3



Join us at our Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Service

Friday, January 14 at 7:00 p.m.

We welcome you as we continue our tradition of inviting members of other faiths into our community to celebrate MLK's messages of unity and inclusion. We look forward to seeing you either in person or online through zoom or Livestream.

For 2022 we are excited and honored to welcome Professor Brandon M. Terry to deliver the keynote sermon.

Dr. Brandon M. Terry is the Presidential Visiting Assistant Professor at Yale University and Assistant Professor of African and African American Studies and of Social Studies at Harvard University. Terry earned a PhD with distinction in Political Science and African American Studies from Yale University, an MSc in Political Theory Research as a Michael von Clemm Fellow at Corpus Christi College at the University of Oxford, and an AB, magna cum laude, in Government and African and African American Studies from Harvard College.





MEMBERSHIP CORNER WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The Congregation extends a warm welcome to new members:

M. Grey Maher and children, Gary & Hana Rudnick, Alexandra & Zachariah, David & Sarah Schoenfeld and children, Rachel, Leah & Zoe, Jason Stanley & Njeri Thande and children, Emile & Alain



TODAH RABAH SHABBAT WELCOME TEAM

Thank you to our Shabbat greeters:

November

- 5 Alan Sturtz
- 12 Richard & Marie Shaw
- 19 Howard Lurie & Diane Rosen
- 26 Richard & Marie Shaw

December

- 3 Karen Kimball, Alan Sturtz, David & Julie Chevan, Howard Lurie, Diane Rosen
- 10 Cliff & True Wolff
- 17 Sarah Greenblatt
- 24 Richard Shaw
- 31 Richard Shaw

For more information about our team of greeters, contact co-chair Karen Kimball at kjkimball@sbcglobal.net.



A MESSAGE FROM THE RABBI

Rabbi Brian P. Immerman

Friends,
I was always skeptical of trip insurance when I was booking a flight. I knew that the fine print would exclude most situations that would

cause me to miss my trip. Then our world was flipped upside down. Trip insurance seemed necessary, a comforting cushion upon which we could land if or when our plans were disrupted by the uncertainty enveloping us. Instead of anxiety when giving our credit card numbers to the airlines we could at least know that we would receive a refund if it wasn't safe to travel. As the pandemic has progressed, the companies eventually had to include COVID in the small print. Having the illness is still worthy of a refund, but COVID anxiety and a surge in cases is not. Booking flights again seems like an uncertain gamble.

Until March, 2020 most of us lived lives filled with a high amount of measured certainty. No matter if we went to school, had a job or not, relied on the train or our cars, we generally had a good idea of how our lives would look on a weekly, monthly, and yearly basis. This certainty allowed us to plan for the future. We planned trips, celebrations, and gatherings with friends and family. We started saving for a special trip 1-2 years away. COVID has not only upended our ability to plan, but has revealed how much uncertainty we actually face. Our anxiety might skyrocket as we frantically search the internet for more forgiving insurance plans to cushion the blow when new information surfaces.

Throughout the past two years, and as we look to the future, we begin to understand that the certainty with which we filled our Google Calendars or New Yorker planners was always precarious. It relied on an unfathomable number of variables lining up each moment so that all of our friends and family were gathered around the table at the exact moment that grandpa blew out the candles. Previously we faced these uncertain moments as individuals – pausing our lives to mourn and grieve, to celebrate a big transition, enduring a sudden job change, to face unforeseen personal news – before we resumed living our lives with certainty.

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CANTOR'S NOTES

Cantor Arthur Giglio

January and February always bring on images of dark, cold, and stormy months. Come to CMI and we will keep you warm and engaged in prayer and song.

If your Cantor had to describe his current take on CMI he would say, "music, music, music!" That says it all! With our singing and playing, Rabbi and our new guitar strumming Cantor, our deck has certainly become stacked. There will be more musical surprises as well, but since they are surprises I cannot exactly tell you yet, but I promise you will be surprised. When the spirit moves you, we want our congregants to be praying with their feet. Why? Because it is joyous and fun! The Jr. Choir has returned and there is nothing more joyous than the sweet voices of children. Come to a Family Service and hear the sweet tones of the Jr. Choir backed by our own Oy Street Band!

January 14th - Save the date! That is our annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Service. We will be bringing you a service to inspire your soul. It is not to be missed. If that wasn't enough, right on the heels of the MLK service is Tu BiSh'vat on January 17th! Tu BiSh'vat is considered a minor holiday but in the light of the many crises that our planet is facing with climate change, I believe it's status needs to be upgraded and overstated. Tu BiSh'vat or the "Birthday of the Trees" is Jewish Arbor Day. Scholars believe that originally, Tu BiSh'vat was an agricultural festival, marking the emergence of spring. The holiday also has become a tree-planting festival in Israel, in which Israelis and Jews around the world plant trees in honor of or in memory of loved ones and friends. Yet, planting trees also saves the planet so it is high time that Tu BiSh'vat takes on a higher place in the lexicon of Jewish holidays. Traditional Jews will even hold a seder and eat at least 15 different types of fruits and vegetables. Wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates, the seven species mentioned in the Torah, are also customarily included. In case you were wondering how

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Michael Dimenstein

Often the lessons we learn as children leave the most long-lasting impressions. That has certainly been my experi-

ence with Shel Silverstein's 1960's picture book and narrative poem, The Giving Tree. Every year when we celebrate the Jewish holiday TuBiSh'vat, I am reminded of this book, which has become a children's classic, and has been translated into many languages and interpreted in perhaps as many ways by readers of all ages. This year, Tu BiSh'vat, the New Year for Trees falls on January 17, 2022, sharing the date with our national observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

A little refresher on Tu BiSh'vat; According to the Talmud, the timing of Tu BiSh'vat corresponds to when trees stop absorbing water from the ground and begin to draw their nourishment from their own sap. It was the ancient custom to bring the first fruit offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem each year at this time. It was a time of thanksgiving for the bounty of grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and other fruits found in the Land of Israel. The importance of trees in our tradition may be traced back to the first book of the Torah, where the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil are presented to the first human inhabitants of the Garden of Eden. The holiday recalls our responsibility to respect nature and to provide for its care and sustainability.

Silverstein's book provides a cautionary tale of the relationship between a selfless tree and a boy who takes for granted the tree's generosity and unconditional love. Throughout every stage of the boy's life, from childhood, to adolescence, to young adulthood, fatherhood and old age, the tree supports him, never expecting anything in return, until there is nothing left for the tree to give. Even after all that remains of

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RABBI'S MESSAGE *continued*

For many in our world and in our community, uncertainty may have always been a daily struggle. A struggle to earn a living wage, a struggle to have heat or electricity, a struggle to find shelter or food, a struggle to overcome a serious illness, or sometimes a struggle simply to survive from one day to the next. When the insurance companies drop our coverage or refuse to take on our case, one of the most important resources we have is our community.

Whether uncertainty is new or it has defined our lives, a caring community can be there to envelop us with love and support. Community doesn't have fine print that excludes certain conditions. We make a covenant with each other that we'll celebrate together, mourn together, and help together. In *pirkei avot* we learn: "You do not have to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it." Our community might not be able to solve all of our issues, but community, especially our CMI family, will always help support those who are in need.

January and February are often the hardest months for many as their darkness persists without the lure of lights and holidays to bring us cheer. Additionally, COVID has cloaked our future in uncertainty, making it hard to plan for the future. We are each a source of light to others in our lives, in our community and in our world and I pray that as the days begin to grow longer our hearts continue to grow larger. We might not be able to plan our next big trip, but we can plan to help others and to connect with each other.

No matter how we connect, online or in person, I look forward to seeing you in the next few months as part of the CMI community. I wish you blessings of light, support, and hope.

CANTOR'S MESSAGE *continued*

it obtained its name, Tu BiSh'vat is derived from the Hebrew date of the holiday, which occurs on the fifteenth day of the month of Shevat. "Tu" stands for the Hebrew letters Tet and Vav, which together have the numerical value of 9 and 6, adding up to 15. Tu BiSh'vat was originally called "Hamisha Asar BiSh'vat", which also means "Fifteenth of Shevat". This is a wonderful vegan seder/holiday

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *continued*

the tree is a stump, it provides a peaceful setting for the now old man to rest comfortably in nature. So much giving and receiving without consideration for the future of the tree, and the next generations of humankind. After a lifetime of exploiting the gifts of nature, there is sadness as we observe the imbalance of our anthropogenic relationship to the environment. More than a half-century since the publication of *The Giving Tree*, the longitudinal consequences of our actions and inactions have become frighteningly clear.

Tu BiSh'vat is the perfect time to take stock of our own personal relationships with the environment and to consider some "New Year's" resolutions that support conservation and sustainability. It can be a time to reflect on all that has been given to us and to ask ourselves what do we give back in return. What do we need now and in the future, and how should we plan our use of natural resources before they are depleted? A good place to start might be to join other members of the CMI community in a collective response to the call for environmental action. Our Environmental Action Group, led by Alice Kosowsky has been busy this year identifying opportunities to forge our path and to partner with other Jewish and interfaith environmental advocacy groups in learning and sharing perspectives on our responsibility to relate to our environment in ways that reflect our ethical commitment to *tikkun olam*—to repair and improve our world. For more information, please contact Alice at akosowsky4@gmail.com.

that can only be healthy for all while contributing to the healing of our planet.

February this year is without any Jewish holidays and that only means you must join us on Shabbat as every week is holiday of *ruach* (soul) and song! Let 2022 be the year we rise from the pandemic like the Phoenix and bring CMI once more to the forefront of the social issues that are now more than ever demanding our attention and action.

SOCIAL ACTION NEWS

Jewish Community Alliance for Refugee Resettlement (JCARR)

by Julie Perlman

JCARR's work with refugees encompasses direct work with the families as well as advocacy work on their behalf. As part of JCARR's advocacy efforts, Jean Silk responded to Senator Blumenthal's request that she speak on November 9, 2021 at his press conference. U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), was joined by local refugee groups to announce bipartisan legislation to require the Biden administration to take seven specific steps to prioritize certain refugee programs, including assisting in evacuation, diplomatic support, and a surge in resources to speed up processing. Jean introduced her remarks with a recap of JCARR'S work resettling refugees. She continued with an explanation of some of the challenges that the Afghan families encounter. In addition to Blumenthal, this legislation is co-sponsored by Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Joni Ernst (R-IA).

It is important to know that individuals arriving with refugee status have a certain set of rights and are eligible for certain designated support programs. Those who don't have refugee status, may enter the country as humanitarian parolees. Many of the Afghan families are entering with that status. Parolees do not receive the benefits and privileges the U.S. grants to refugees: they are not eligible for cash assistance and are not immediately authorized to work. There are 1 million asylum applications pending in the U.S. today. Given the long delays in getting a decision on a petition for asylum, asylum-seekers must either work illegally or be unemployed. In either case, they live in poverty. Unlike those with refugee status, parolees do not have a direct path to permanent residency, and as long as they remain asylum-seekers, they will find their livelihood and future imperiled. Refugees, asylum-seekers, the 80+ million displaced people across the globe don't leave their countries because they WANT TO. They leave to escape persecution and violence. They are seeking peace, safety, freedom and opportunity to build new lives.



Jean Silk speaking at Blumenthal press conference October 25, 2021

Fortunately, Congress passed a continuing resolution that makes Afghan "humanitarian parolees" eligible to receive refugee resettlement services and benefits, such as reception and placement support and food assistance. However, under humanitarian parole, Afghan nationals can remain in the U.S. only temporarily; parolees are granted protection from deportation for just two years. The proposed Afghan Adjustment Act would allow Afghan parolees to have an opportunity to seek legal permanent residence. These parolees deserve an opportunity to rebuild their lives in safety – without the fear and limitations associated with uncertain immigration status. They need an accelerated route to becoming U.S. citizens

Volunteers with groups like JCARR can affirm from direct experience that refugees and asylum-seekers are eager to become self-supporting, productive citizens in our communities. We need to reconstitute the "regular" refugee resettlement program so that families who have been in that pipeline for years have a chance of getting out of their own dangerous situations. JCARR and many other community groups

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SOCIAL ACTION NEWS

Jewish Community Alliance for Refugee Resettlement (JCARR)
(continued from page 5)

stand ready to assist Afghans in every way we can to build new lives in Connecticut. To make an online donation you can go to jewishnewhaven.org/refugee-resettlement/give or send checks, payable to The Jewish Federation, with JCARR in the memo line, to The Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven 360 Amity Road, Woodbridge, 06525, Attention Amy Holtz. JCARR is also accepting gift cards which can be sent to Jean Silk at 125 McKinley Avenue, New Haven, 06515 or Kris Oser at 29 Audubon Close, Milford, 06460.



GET READY FOR CONFRONTING RACISM, VERSION 2.2

CMI's popular, thought-provoking Confronting Racism series will soon be starting up again. This year, the series will combine quarterly events with monthly small cohort groups. If you weren't registered for the series in the past, or if you'd like to know more, please contact: Karen Baar at karen.baar@gmail.com. More information will be available on the CMI website and in the weekly CMI enews. We're looking forward to continuing this journey with you.



PEAH GARDEN PROJECT

The Peah Project was started in 1990 by Rabbi Herbert Brockman and is located behind the CMI synagogue. Peah, Hebrew for "corner", is the name of the sections of Mishnah and Talmud that discuss the laws of gifts to the poor when agricultural crops are harvested. In the Torah, Leviticus (19:9-10) commands us to "leave the corners of your field for the poor, the widowed and strangers."

Our organic garden has 15 plots with half of the crops harvested for area food pantries and the other half for volunteer gardener's personal use. The vegetables are harvested, weighed, bagged, logged, and stored in two on site refrigerators. There are deliveries twice a week during peak growing season. Close to two tons of vegetables were donated this year.

There were 27 volunteers this year who harvested produce from their assigned plots or delivered produce to area food pantries. Each month one work-day is scheduled to work on community projects within the garden and local high school students from ACES came to weed and harvest vegetables to deliver to the Keefe Center. At the end of the season, a pot luck dinner was held to celebrate the partnership with area food pantries and assess the year's success and plan for next year.

The Food Pantries that were supported this year were Loaves and Fishes, the Breakthrough Church and the Keefe Center. The following is some information about each of them and what they provide to the community.

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Loaves and Fishes: Loaves and Fishes believes that all people deserve access to nutritious, high quality meals. They make this happen by putting real food first: meat, eggs, fresh produce, and healthy pantry staples. They provide nutritious and culturally appropriate food, using varied sources to accomplish this goal. Loaves and Fishes also offers food deliveries to the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Agency on Aging as well as pre-packaged groceries on Saturday mornings from 8 – 10:30AM at 57 Olive Street, New Haven.

Breakthrough Church: The Breakthrough Church has a food pantry that is open the second and third Saturday of the month from 12-2 p.m. Individuals, families and seniors in the Greater New Haven area can walk in during food pantry hours.

Keefe Community Center: The Keefe Community Center Food Bank at 11 Pine Street Hamden provides residents of Hamden a three-day supply of food once a month. The food bank offers shelf-stable non-perishable foods, frozen meats, fresh produce, and meal kits when available.

JOIN CMI'S NEW ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY GROUP

Come fulfill the mitzvah of shomrei adama, protecting our earth for us and future generations. This past March, several congregants formed a new climate change advocacy group. We plan to join Dayenu, a national Jewish environmental organization which is part of the Jewish Council of Public Affairs and create our own "Dayenu Circle" at CMI. In accordance with our values here at CMI, we are also looking into joining the Connecticut chapter of the Inter-Religious EcoJustice Network, a group comprising congregations from ten faiths.

As a part of these organizations, we will engage in local, state and national legislative advocacy, bring speakers to educate our community, and support green energy choices. All are welcome, regardless of your age, area of interest and level of experience. To learn more, please email Alice Kosowsky at akosowsky4@gmail.com.



NURSERY SCHOOL NEWS

Susan Witten Nason,
Early Childhood Director

Happy, healthy 2022 to all!
We are having a great winter so far. We still spend as much

time outdoors as possible and as the saying goes, "there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing." !We stay warm in our hats, mittens, scarves and boots, and look pretty cute, as well. That being said, though, we do look forward to spring. We will soon be celebrating Tu BiSh'vat, and have lots of fun ways to celebrate the new year of the trees. Around the same time, we will be learning about and honoring the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Enjoy the rest of the winter, and we'll see you in the Spring.



MAZEL TOV TO OUR NEWEST B'MITZVAH

Adam Tuchmann
February 26, 2022
Son of Paul Tuchmann &
Deborah Coen

2021-2022 CHAI HOLY DAY CAMPAIGN

Thank you to everybody who donated to the Chai Holy Days campaign! Well over one hundred CMI families responded to David Astrachan's powerful appeal from the bimah at Rosh Hashanah. These generous unrestricted contributions will allow CMI to address some of the financial challenges our congregation has faced during the pandemic. Together, we have exceeded our goal of \$180,000, set to honor the lives of the many people who have been part of our congregation's 180 year history. We are grateful to every person who has reached deep into their pockets to make sure that CMI will stay strong now and well into the future.

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*In Perpetual Memory

JANUARY 14

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Gertrude Baumgartl Wolf*

*In Perpetual Memory

FEBRUARY 11

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FEBRUARY 18

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Joan H. Schwarzkopf*
Harvey Seltzer
Gershon Tziferman
Hannah Stodel Weiner*
Jacob Abraham Weiner*
Samuel Zakar
Gertrude Zwickler

IN SYMPATHY

Heidi Parlato on the passing of her father, Richard Puklin
Merle Brown on the passing of her husband, Jay Brown

—IN MEMORIAM—

Myrna Baskin
Jim Millen

Michael Susman
Edith Wolkovitz

May their memory be a blessing



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DANA ASTMANN, with gratitude

Tamar Skowronski
and love for mentoring
Sasha for her Bat Mitzvah

In Honor of
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“...who donates much
to charity becomes the richer
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Zohar iii nob

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**JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE
PURIM!
FRIDAY, MARCH 18 AT 6:00 P.M.**

Come dressed in costume and enjoy the fun as Rabbi Immerman and Cantor Giglio read the megillah! It is sure to be an exciting evening as we join together again in our sanctuary after two years away!



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RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE



Thursday, February 10
9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

We are excited to once again partner with the American Red Cross for two upcoming blood drives. We will be working together to give back to the community in a truly life changing way, since each donation we collect can save up to three lives! Please call the Red Cross at 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org and enter Mishkan to schedule an appointment.

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ISRAEL BULLETIN**

January/February 2022 Series 106 #3
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sperry@cmihamden.org

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**SAVE
THE
DATE**

Annual Cantor's Concert

Saturday, May 21 at 6:00 p.m.

Cantor Giglio needs volunteers to help plan and execute the first in-person Cantor's Concert since COVID began. We need help with everything – planning, setup, tickets, food, decorations, etc. This will be our largest event of the year and we need to get our team together as soon as possible! Please contact Cantor Giglio at cantorg@cmihamden.org if you would like to help.